

**FACT SHEET**  
**FEBRUARY 2001**

# **DTSC Plans Closure of the Aerojet Open Burn Pads**

**RANCHO CORDOVA CALIFORNIA**



**California  
Environmental  
Protection Agency**



**DEPARTMENT OF TOXIC  
SUBSTANCES CONTROL**

***It is DTSC's mission  
to protect public  
health and the  
environment from  
harmful exposure  
to hazardous  
substances.***

## **INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this fact sheet is to encourage public participation in the review of the Draft Closure Plan proposed for the open burn facility at Aerojet General Corporation's Sacramento Operations Facility (Aerojet). The California Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) is proposing a Draft Closure Plan for 16 open burn pads, previously used to burn waste rocket propellant and other materials used in rocket fuel. Aerojet is located fifteen miles east of Sacramento off U.S. Highway 50 in Rancho Cordova (see location map on page four).

This fact sheet includes:

- Background on the Aerojet facility;
- A description of the open burn facility;
- A description of the Draft Closure Plan;
- A discussion of the California Environmental Quality Act Negative Declaration;
- and Information about the public involvement process.

## **BACKGROUND**

Aerojet is a privately-owned company that manufactures liquid and solid rocket propulsion systems as well as pharmaceuticals for governmental and commercial uses. Aerojet has approximately 8,500 acres situated in eastern Sacramento County, south of U.S. Highway 50. Currently, the Aerojet facility has industrial and office buildings associated with the manufacture and testing of rockets, other propulsion systems, and fine chemicals for use in drug manufacture.

Aerojet operations produce hazardous waste which must be managed in accordance with the Federal Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA), the California Health and Safety Code and the California Code of Regulations. The proposed project involves the approval of the Draft Closure Plan for the closure of 16 open burn pads in what Aerojet calls the RCRA-R Complex (see



map on page four). The facility has given DTSC notice that they will request a permit modification to allow one burn pad to remain operational for cases of emergency.

Public Hearing and Public Comment Period

April 10, 2001

7:00 PM

Regional Water Quality Control Board  
3443 Routier Road  
Sacramento CA 95827

Public Comment Period begins March 9, 2001  
and ends close of business April 17, 2001

## THE OPEN BURN FACILITY

Aerojet designated the open burn facility to be RCRA-R Complex. Aerojet used the sixteen pads to open burn waste rocket propellant, explosives, and pyrotechnics (PEP) generated at Aerojet during the manufacturing and refurbishment of solid rocket propulsion systems. The PEP wastes were transported to the RCRA-R Complex from several locations around the Aerojet facility where propellant mixing is performed, where propellant processing equipment is cleaned, where rocket motors are cleaned out during motor rebuild operations, and where Aerojet conducts propellant research and development.

The PEP wastes, upon arrival at the RCRA-R Complex, were placed on one of the sixteen sand covered, reinforced concrete pads. The pads are designated by type of waste so that compatible wastes were burned together. The wastes were ignited electronically from a remote control building and following the burning, the pad was inspected and any remaining material is burned again. After burning was completed, Aerojet gathered the remaining ash into bins and transported to an authorized off-site disposal facility.

In 1997, the last year of operation, Aerojet burned 66.7 tons of material.

## DRAFT CLOSURE PLAN

The Draft Closure Plan specifies procedures Aerojet must follow to address the remaining contamination in soil underneath the pads and in soil around the pads. The Draft Closure Plan also requires the removal of the pads. Aerojet will also sample the groundwater underneath the pads as well as the soil. Aerojet will sample the soil immediately around the pads as well as the soil immediately underneath the pads. Aerojet will take samples as deep as thirty feet below the pads. Contractor staff will analyze the samples for any solvents, petroleum derivatives, waste jet or rocket fuel components, or acids. If the analytical results indicate that any of these chemicals are present in the soil either at the surface or beneath the pads, the soil will be removed and shipped to an authorized off-site disposal facility. If more clean-up activities are necessary for contamination, Aerojet will conduct them later under the oversight of the United States Environmental Protection Agency and DTSC Site Mitigation Branch. These further clean-up activities will be an integral part of the Superfund clean-up activities for the entire facility.

## CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT

As lead agency, DTSC is responsible for reviewing the potential health and environmental risks from the proposed closure of the open burn pads. In compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), DTSC conducted an Initial Study of the effects of the Draft Closure Plan. This Study is the basis for a proposed Negative Declaration concluding that the Draft Closure Plan will not have any significant impact on the environment.

## **PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT**

DTSC encourages members of the public to review and comment on the Draft Closure Plan and the proposed Negative Declaration. Your review can provide input that can be valuable for DTSC. You can consult and review the documents at the established information repository listed below.

DTSC will also conduct a public hearing on March 29, 2001 at Mills Middle School in Rancho Cordova. At that time, DTSC will receive oral and written comments on the Draft Closure Plan and proposed CEQA Negative Declaration. DTSC will also accept written comments on the Draft Closure Plan and proposed CEQA Negative Declaration during the public comment period. The public comment period began on March 9, 2001 and ends on April 17, 2001. After carefully considering and responding, in writing, to all of the comments on the Draft Closure Plan and the proposed Negative Declaration, DTSC will decide whether to approve the Draft Closure Plan.

## **INFORMATION REPOSITORY**

The Draft Closure Plan, all related documents and the full administrative record may be reviewed at the following information repository:

Department of Toxic Substances Control  
10151 Croydon Way, Suite 3  
Sacramento CA 95827  
Hours: 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM (Monday to Friday)  
Contact Alberta McMurray at (916) 255-3758

## **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION**

If you have any questions or comments regarding these DTSC activities at Aerojet, please contact the following DTSC staff:

Nathan Schumacher  
Public Participation Specialist  
(916) 255-3650

John Papathakis  
Project Manager for the Draft Closure Plan  
(916) 255-3579

If you are from the media, please contact Lisa Kunz  
(916) 324-8304

If you have questions about the activities under Superfund for clean-up of Aerojet, please call:

Ed Cargile  
Project Manager for Superfund Clean-up  
(916) 255-3703

### **Notice to Hearing Impaired Individuals:**

TDD users can obtain additional information about Aerojet and the open burn facility by using the California State Relay Service (1-888-877-5378) and asking to reach Nathan Schumacher at (916) 255-3650.

